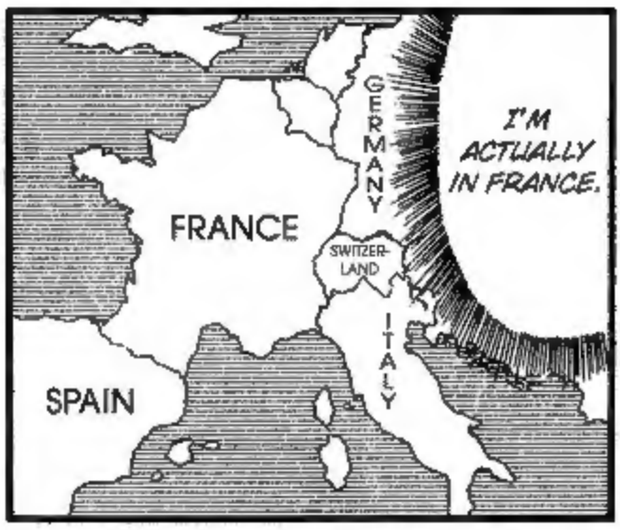
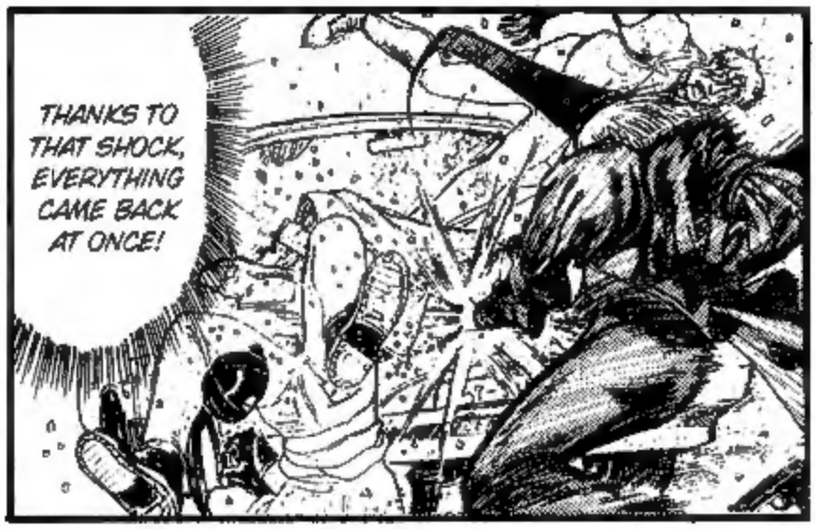
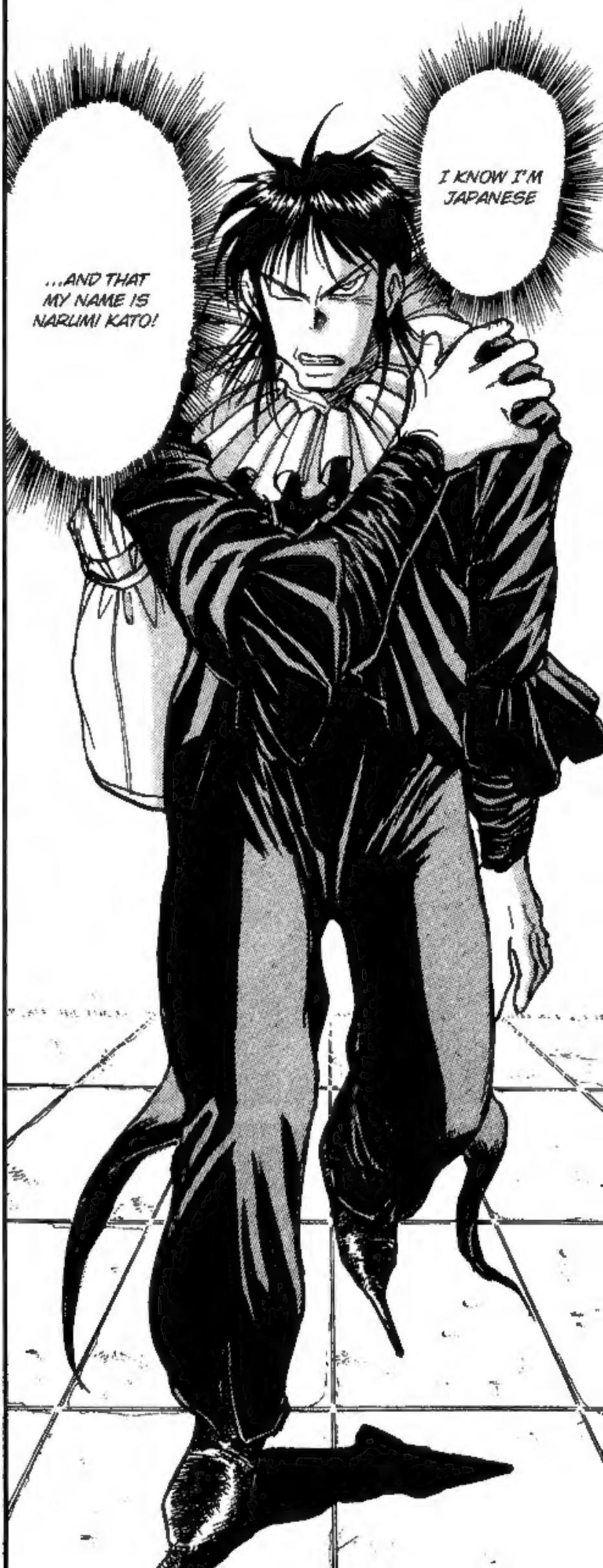




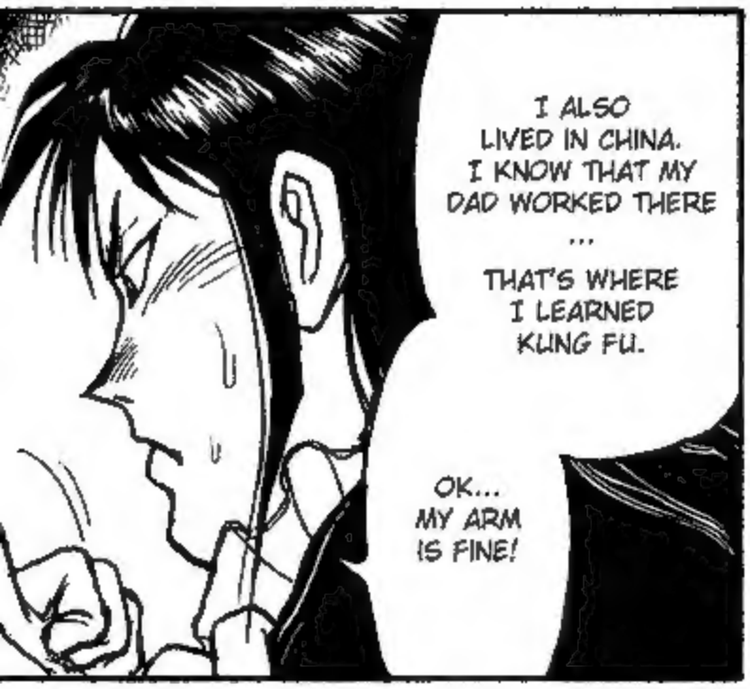
ACT VII: KARAKURI * A MAN "GUY RECH"

I'VE GOT CRAMPS ALL OVER! I'M HURTING EVERY-WHERE! BUT THAT'S GOTTA BE NORMAL... I JUST STOPPED A CAR DRIVING AT FULL SPEED WITH MY BARE HANDS!
OUCH!

IT SMELLS A LITTLE ROTTEN, BUT IT'S VERY PRECIOUS TO ME.
I HOPE THIS ARM ISN'T BROKEN ...


...AND THAT MY NAME IS NARUMI KATO!
I KNOW I'M JAPANESE

HOTEL


I ALSO LIVED IN CHINA. I KNOW THAT MY DAD WORKED THERE ... THAT'S WHERE I LEARNED KUNG FU.
OK... MY ARM IS FINE!

WHAT A BLOW...

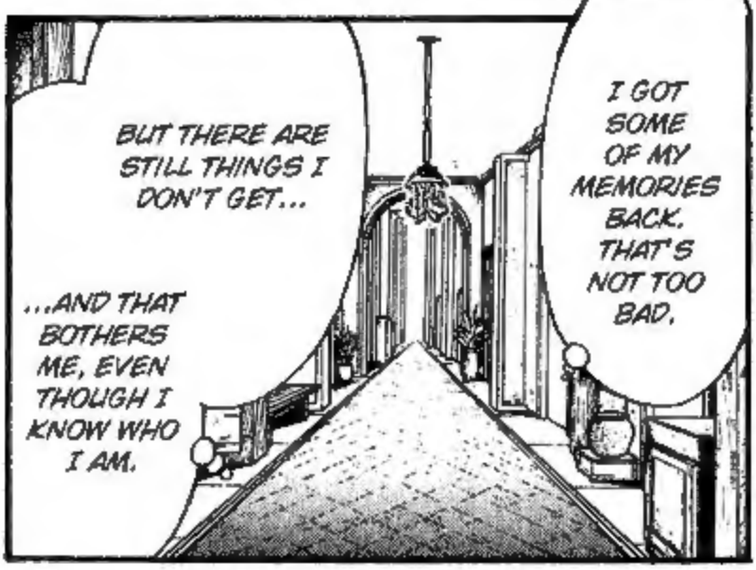
THEN ...
I DON'T REMEMBER ANYTHING
AFTER THAT...

3
4
PIII
THAT'S WHY I WENT BACK TO JAPAN...

4
TO TAKE ON SMALL JOBS THAT WOULD ALLOW ME TO MAKE PEOPLE LAUGH.

BACK IN CHINA, I CAUGHT A DISEASE WHICH CAN BE FATAL IF I DON'T MAKE OTHERS LAUGH ...
THE NAME OF THAT SINISTER DISEASE IS "ZONAPHA SYNDROME." I REMEMBER THAT WELL TOO.
1 2 3 4

HOW DID I LOSE MY ARM?
AND WHY AM I IN FRANCE NOW?!

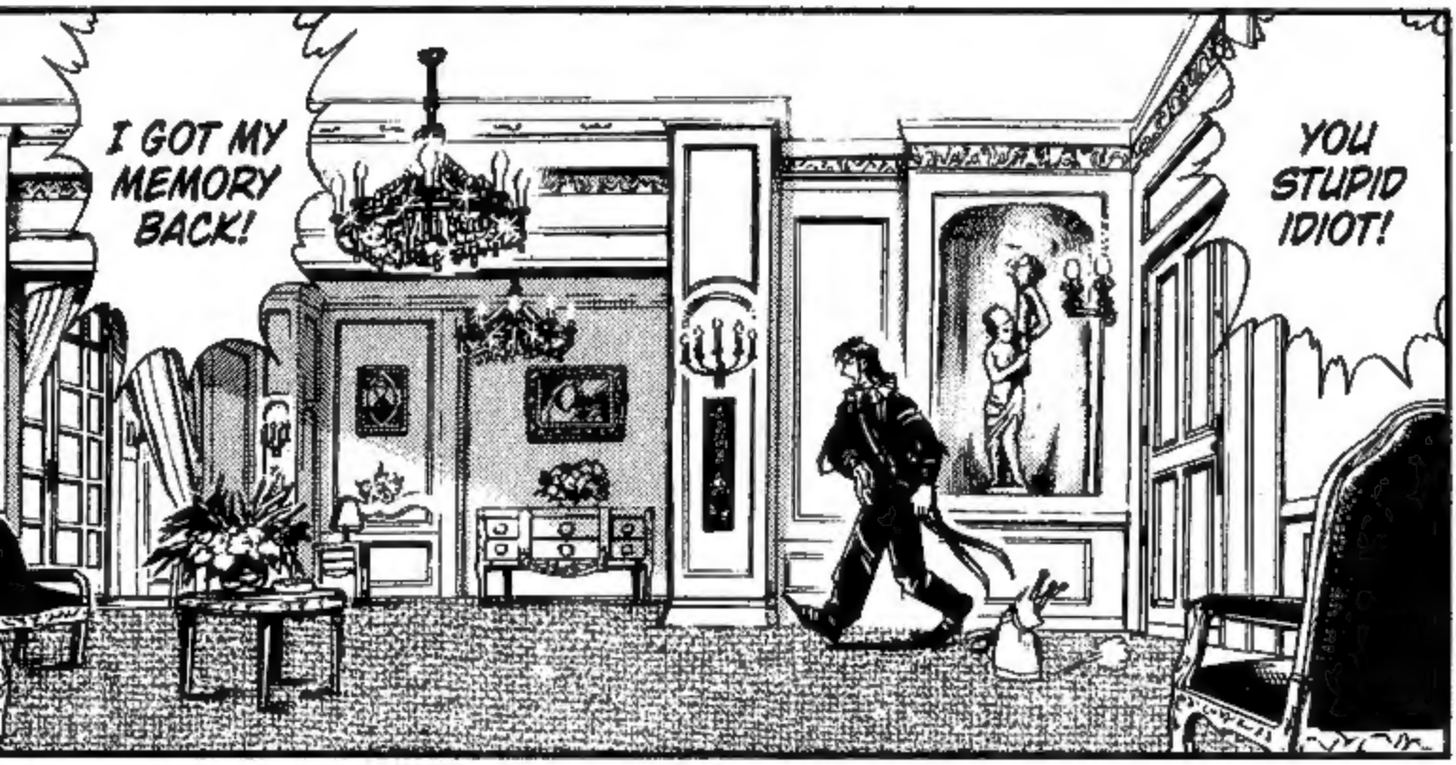

I GOT SOME OF MY MEMORIES BACK. THAT'S NOT TOO BAD.
BUT THERE ARE STILL THINGS I DON'T GET...
...AND THAT BOTHERS ME, EVEN THOUGH I KNOW WHO I AM.

OK...
...I'D BETTER CALM DOWN.
DING

I'M GONNA GIVE HIM A PIECE OF MY MIND, THAT PSEUDO-DOCTOR!
WHEN I THINK HE SAID "TO RECOVER YOUR MEMORY, THE BEST THING WOULD BE TO PRACTICE TO BECOME A CLOWN"! BULLCRAP!

I UNDERSTOOD THAT IT WASN'T BY CHOICE THAT I DRESSED LIKE A CLOWN EVERY DAY AND PRACTICED MIMING AND JUGGLING...

GUY-
CHRISTOPHE
RECH!
DAAN
HEY!
GUY!


I GOT MY
MEMORY
BACK!
YOU
STUPID
IDIOT!

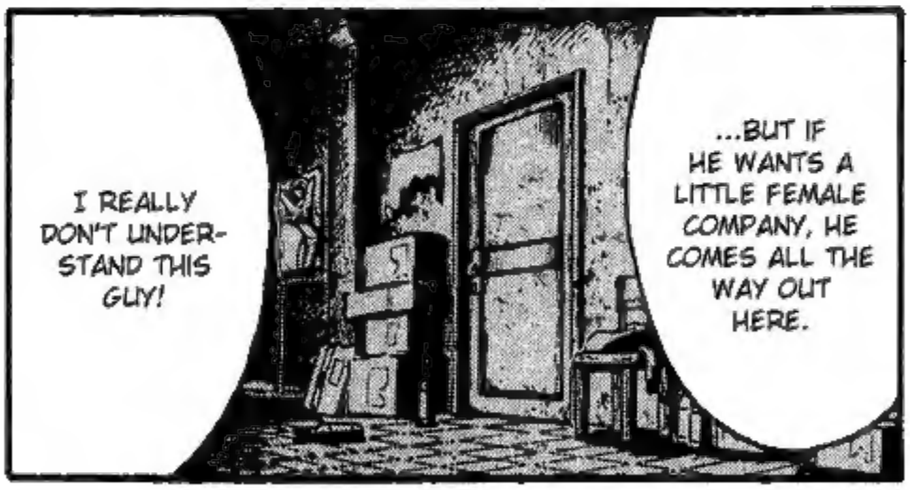
...AND TODAY, I
ALMOST ENDED UP
DEAD BECAUSE OF
A CAR! LUCKILY,
THE SHOCK ALSO
GAVE ME MY
MEMORY BACK!
I RAN
OUT OF
MEDICINE
TWO
DAYS
AGO...

I WAS
STUPIDLY
DOING WHAT
YOU TOLD
ME TO DO,
WITHOUT
THINKING!
UNTIL NOW,
BECAUSE OF
THE MEDICINE
YOU GAVE ME
AND THAT STUPID
CLOWN THERAPY
YOU TOLD ME TO
DO, MY MIND WAS
NEVER REALLY
THERE!!!

HM...

YOU GOTTA TELL ME EVERYTHING YOU KNOW ABOUT ME!
SHOOT! HE'S NOT THERE...

USUALLY, IF HE'S NOT IN HIS HOTEL ROOM, HE COMES HERE TO ENJOY HIMSELF.


I REALLY DON'T UNDER-STAND THIS GUY!
...BUT IF HE WANTS A LITTLE FEMALE COMPANY, HE COMES ALL THE WAY OUT HERE.

HE CAN LIVE IN THE SUITE OF A BIG HOTEL IN DOWNTOWN PARIS...

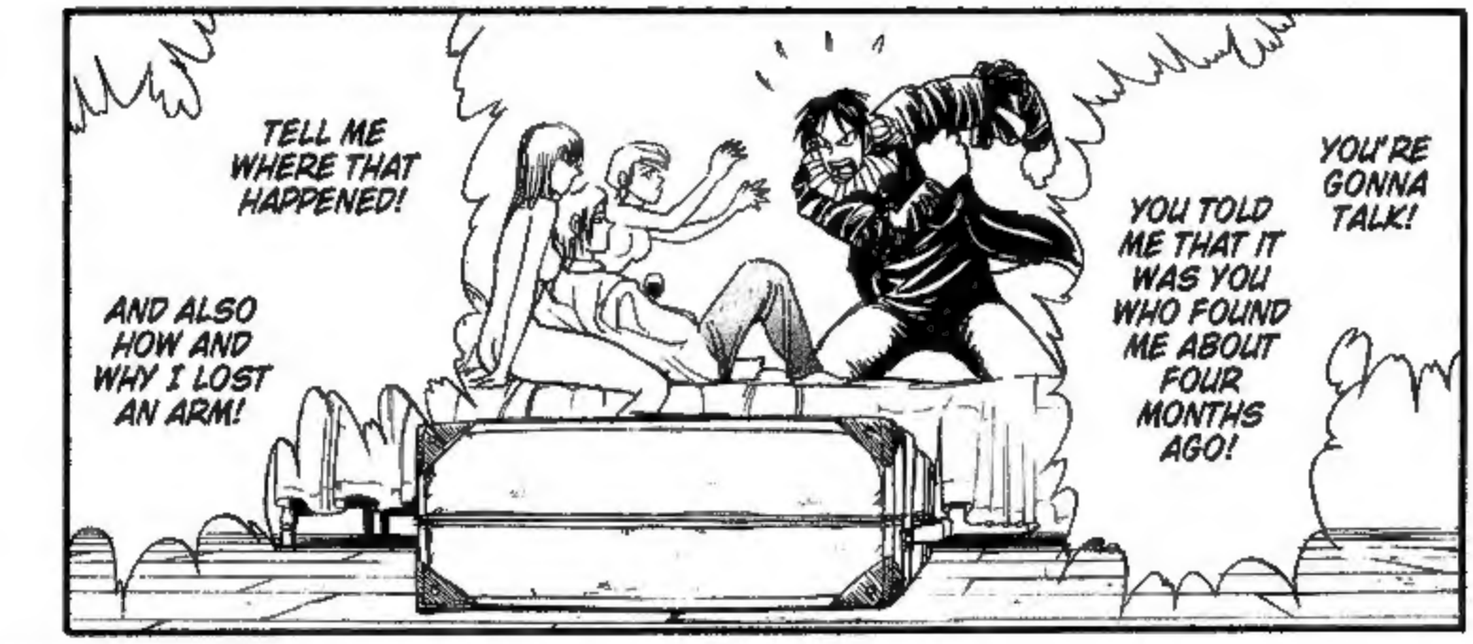
HEY! GUY!!!
BOM
BOM

CLAC
BOM
I'M COMING IN!
ANSWER ME! WHAT AM I DOING IN FRANCE ?!

SLURP
"LIFE IS A STAGE"
"EVERYBODY HAS A ROLE TO PLAY ON IT"
HEE HEE
SHAKE-SPEARE ONCE SAID
BLUP BLUP
KNOW THAT...
PHW...

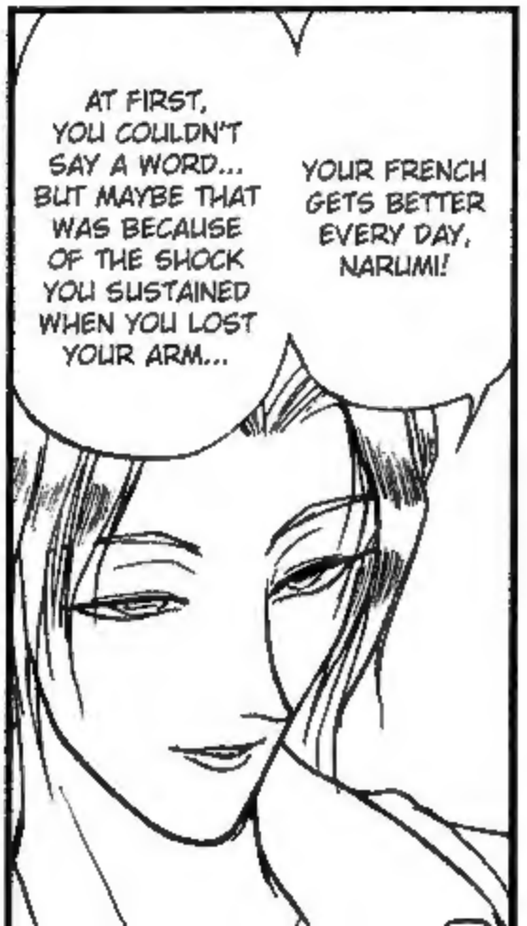
...IS THAT OF A HARLEQUIN WHO SINGS A BEAUTIFUL BALLAD DEDICATED TO THOSE WHO ARE TIRED OF LIVING!
...THE ROLE I GAVE MYSELF...
...BOTHER THIS HARLEQUIN?
REALLY! WHAT KIND OF IDIOT WOULD DARE...

SHUT UP!!! I'VE GOT NO INTENT TO TAKE PART IN YOUR PRETENTIOUS LITTLE MASQUERADE!!!
ZAAN


TELL ME WHERE THAT HAPPENED!
AND ALSO HOW AND WHY I LOST AN ARM!
YOU TOLD ME THAT IT WAS YOU WHO FOUND ME ABOUT FOUR MONTHS AGO!
YOU'RE GONNA TALK!

GRRRR ...
YOU ARE THE PERFECT ILLUSTRATION TO KONIG'S THEORY, WHICH SAYS: "EVEN A STUPID MONKEY CAN LEARN SOMETHING, THANKS TO EXERCISES REPEATED REGULARLY"!

I'M SLOWLY GETTING USED TO IT!
IT'S TRUE THAT I WAS IN EXTREME SHOCK... BUT I'VE NEVER BEEN TO FRANCE BEFORE! IT'S ONLY BEEN FOUR MONTHS SINCE I STARTED LEARNING FRENCH!


AT FIRST, YOU COULDN'T SAY A WORD... BUT MAYBE THAT WAS BECAUSE OF THE SHOCK YOU SUSTAINED WHEN YOU LOST YOUR ARM...
YOUR FRENCH GETS BETTER EVERY DAY, NARUMI!

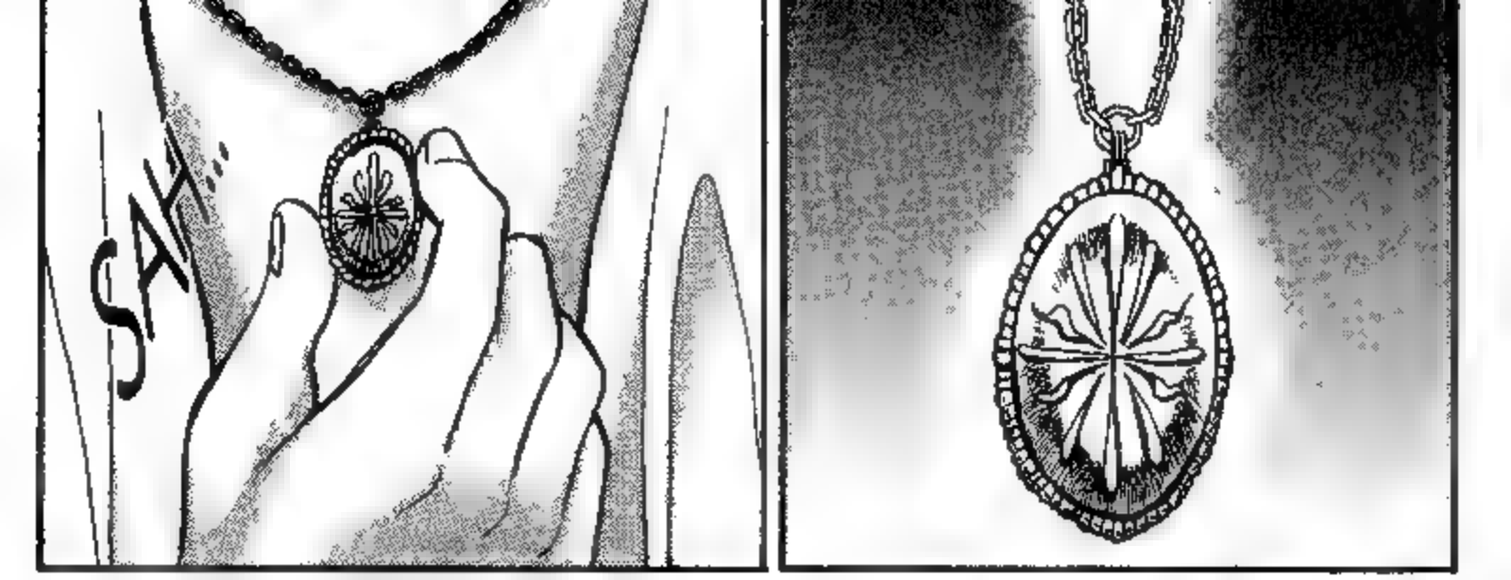
HEUH
HEUH
ARE YOU MOCKING ME, OR WHAT?!? YOU WANT ME TO HIT YOU?!

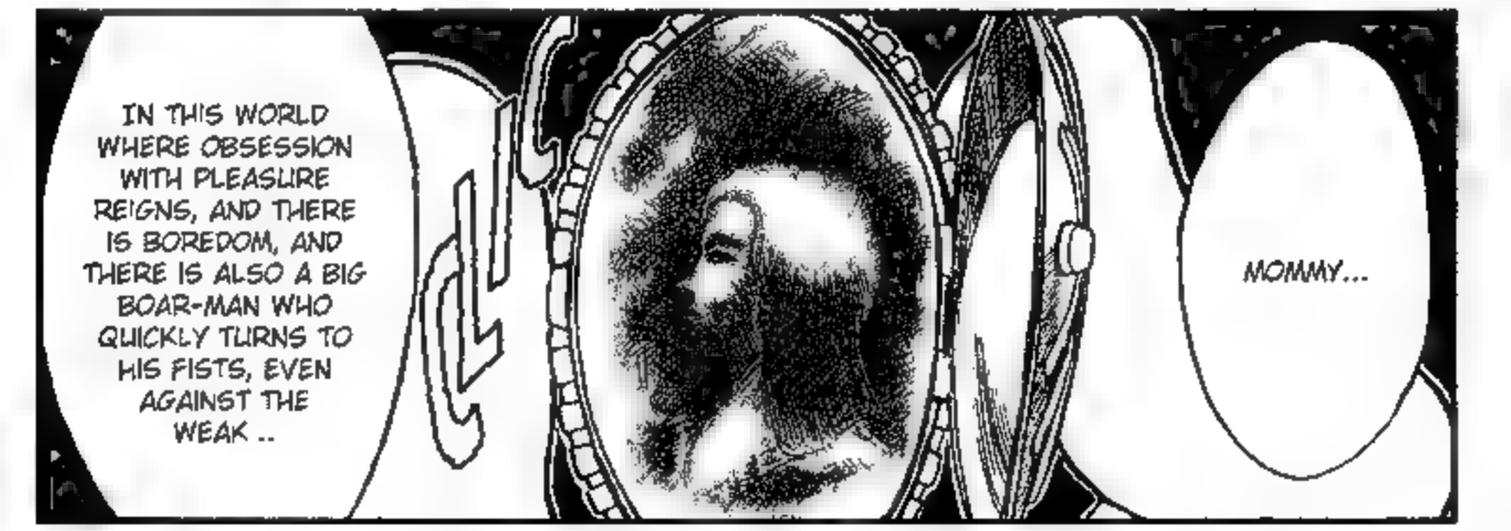
BUT I CAN'T BELIEVE THAT YOU WOULD HIT A SICK PERSON...

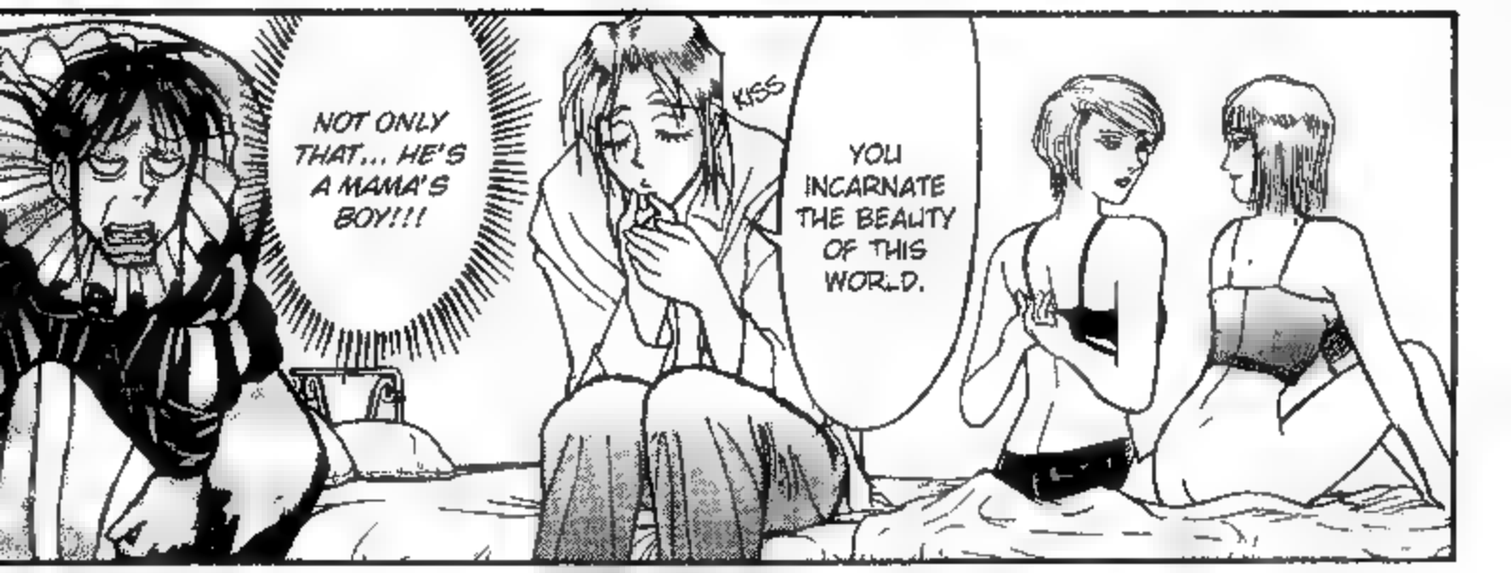
I UNDERSTAND PERFECTLY... THAT YOU ARE WORRIED ABOUT THOSE DARK SPOTS THAT REMAIN IN YOUR MEMORY ...
GRRR
!!!
...WHAT?
HEUH

THAT DEVIOUS MAN! HE ALWAYS CHANGES THE SUB-JECT LIKE THAT!
NO WAY! IT'S RED WINE!
... BLOOD!

AH!


SAH...


IN THIS WORLD WHERE OBSESSION WITH PLEASURE REIGNS, AND THERE IS BOREDOM, AND THERE IS ALSO A BIG BOAR-MAN WHO QUICKLY TURNS TO HIS FISTS, EVEN AGAINST THE WEAK ..
MOMMY...


NOT ONLY THAT... HE'S A MAMA'S BOY!!!
KISS
YOU INCARNATE THE BEAUTY OF THIS WORLD.

ZAZAAN

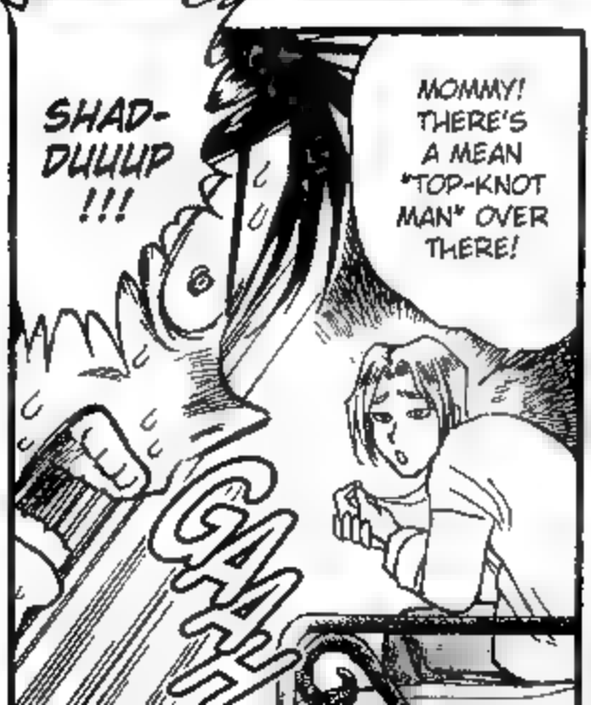
GUY! LISTEN TO ME WHEN I SPEAK TO YOU!
HUH?! WHO'S THE "BIG BOAR-MAN"?!

LET ME REMIND YOU THAT I'M THE ONE WHO FOUND YOU PRACTICALLY DEAD...
AND WITH ONE LESS ARM.

I THOUGHT JAPANESE PEOPLE WERE OVERLY POLITE, TO THE POINT OF SERVILITY!
YOU TIRE ME OUT.

I'M THE ONE WHO HEALED YOU AND GAVE YOU THIS SPECIAL PROS-THETIC ARM!

YEAH... MAYBE YOU'RE RIGHT!
BUT EVERY TIME YOU SPEAK, YOU MANAGE TO PISS ME OFF!
GRRR
YOU SHOULD BE A LITTLE MORE GRATEFUL. I THINK YOU SHOULD EVEN KNEEL BEFORE ME AND WORSHIP ME AS YOUR GOD!
YOU OWE ME YOUR LIFE! SO... TRY NOT TO FORGET THAT!

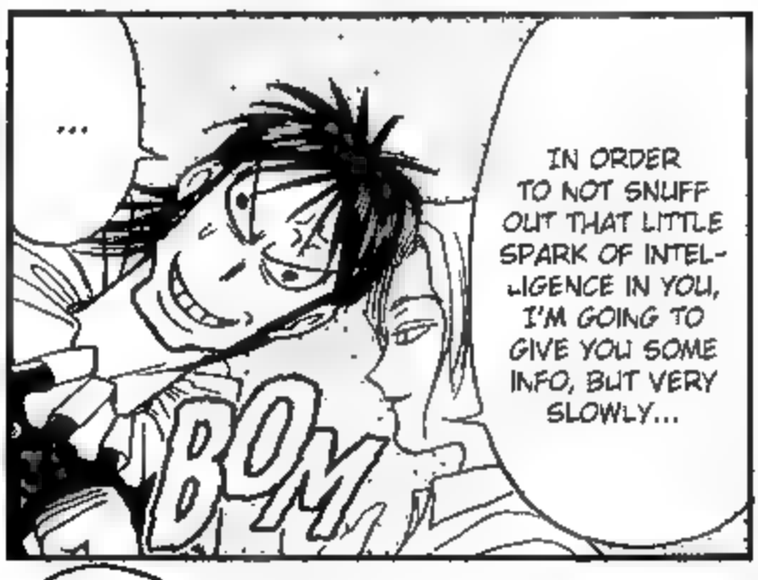

SHAD-DUUUP !!!
MOMMY! THERE'S A MEAN "TOP-KNOT MAN" OVER THERE!
GAAH!

STOP MAKING FUN OF THE JAPANESE! WE'RE NOT LIKE THAT ANY-MORE!
ACTUALLY, THE JAPANESE STILL WEAR TOP-KNOTS AND THEIR COUNTRY IS STILL CLOSED TO THE WORLD!
PFFT!

ALRIGHT, THAT'S ENOUGH! GIMME THAT STUPID PENDANT AND LISTEN TO ME!
AH!
DAH
MOMMY ...
OH! MOM...
GHH
HH
NO!
AND HE'S COMPLETELY GAGA!
HE'S SO MEAN...
... MOMMY!
GRR GRR GRR

OH WELL, YOU'RE PROBABLY AT A POINT WHERE YOU HAVE TO MAKE PROGRESS NO MATTER WHAT, TO PRESERVE YOUR MISERABLE LIFE.
YOU'RE JUST AS MEAN AS YOU LOOK!

COME ON! HURRY UP!
HEUH HEUH


...
IN ORDER TO NOT SNUFF OUT THAT LITTLE SPARK OF INTELLIGENCE IN YOU, I'M GOING TO GIVE YOU SOME INFO, BUT VERY SLOWLY...
BOM

YES, BETWEEN AUTOMATONS AND THE HUMANS WHO TRY TO DESTROY THEM ...

... AH?
...WITHOUT ANYONE'S KNOWLEDGE, A GREAT STRUGGLE HAS BEEN TAKING PLACE IN THE SHADOWS.
FOR TWO CENTURIES ...

...THIS INFO WILL BE MUCH MORE USEFUL BY ALLOWING YOU TO BETTER UNDERSTAND THE SITUATION.
RATHER THAN THE ANSWERS YOU EXPECT ...
...WHAT ARE YOU BABBLING ABOUT?!
WHAT I WANNA KNOW...
...THINK AND ACT OF THEIR OWN ACCORD.
THE AUTOMA-TONS I'M TALKING ABOUT...
YOU TALK ABOUT AUTOMATONS, BUT... THEY'RE JUST PUPPETS WITH SPRINGS, LIKE THE ONES ON SOME MUSIC BOXES, RIGHT?
WHAT?! ... WAIT!
WHAT IF, IN ADDITION ...
...THEY WERE TRYING TO BRING MISFORTUNE TO THE HUMAN WORLD?
CLK
CLK
CLK
BUT WHAT IF IT WERE TRUE?
SO THEY'RE ROBOTS! BUT EVEN WITH TODAY'S SCIENCE, WE CAN'T MAKE THEM YET!

HUH?! WHAT THE HECK IS THAT?!?
DA DA DA DA
GET DOWN!
CYBELE.
WE MISSED OUR TARGET,
IT'S A MISS, HELEN.
CLIC CLIC
CLIC CLIC
CLIC CLIC

CLAC
SCHLAC
CLIC
CLIC
LET'S KEEP GOING, HELEN!
WITH PLEASURE, CYBELE!
...THEY'RE AUTOMA-TONS!
THEY PERFECTLY ILLUSTRATE WHAT I WAS TELLING YOU.
BUT... THESE GIRLS... THEY...
ZZAN
ZZAN
ZZAN
THEY ARE ALL CALLED...
CLIC
CLIC
CLIC
THEY USE VERY SPECIAL PUPPETS.
AGAINST THEM, THERE IS A GROUP OF HUMANS WHOSE SOLE PURPOSE IS TO DESTROY THEM.
LOW

...
"SHIROGANE"!

NARUMI,
YOU'RE GOING TO
HAVE TO GIVE ME
A HAND...